

“Whatever Trump did must be wrong.” And by the way, the Trump guys, by and large, said, “Whatever Obama did must be wrong.” That is not a new thing. Whenever you have a change in an administration, that tends to be a default position. But what I urged them to do is, just because that is your knee-jerk instinct, this was a massive bipartisan victory for America, a national security victory that we won that Joe Biden is on the verge of throwing away.

The Secretary of State sat in my office and promised to fight to sanction Nord Stream 2. The Deputy Secretary of State sat in my office and promised to fight to sanction Nord Stream 2. The Under Secretary of State sat in my office and promised to fight to sanction Nord Stream 2. They did, in fact, fight to sanction Nord Stream 2, but unfortunately they were overruled by the White House, which made a political decision to give in to Putin.

In those circumstances, when you are defying explicit U.S. law, when you are defying the overwhelming bipartisan consensus of Congress, and when you are endangering U.S. national security and, indeed, turning a victory into a loss, I think it is appropriate to use the tools we have in front of us.

That being said, I have engaged in active negotiation with the Biden administration. In the past week, I have had conversations on this topic with the Secretary of the Treasury, with the Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, with the National Security Advisor. I have had conversations with multiple Democratic Senators about a path forward.

But I will tell you what the path forward is not going to be. It is not going to be, let's roll over, give Putin his pipeline, and accept a massive national security loss for America. If that is where Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS want to go, they can go there, but they are not going to go there with my acquiescence, and I am going to use every tool I have as a Senator, elected by the people of Texas, to prevent that outcome.

Accordingly, because Joe Biden's decision to defy U.S. law; to defy the overwhelming bipartisan consensus of Congress; to surrender to Vladimir Putin; to give him his No. 1 priority—a multibillion-dollar pipeline that will provide billions of dollars of rewards for Russia for decades to come—because that decision is a generational geopolitical mistake on the order of magnitude of Jimmy Carter giving away the Panama Canal—that even 50 years later, the consequences of that geopolitical mistake still reverberate—50 years from now, Russian dictators will benefit from Joe Biden's weakness on Russia.

Because that strengthens Russia, because it empowers Russia to attack our enemies, to extort our enemies, to engage in economic blackmail against our enemies—our allies, rather—because our allies are begging us not to do this—I have met with senior offi-

cials of the Ukraine. The Ukrainians are begging us not to do this, and the Biden White House is threatening Ukraine: Keep your mouth shut because we have a political objective here.

Because that strengthens Russia at the expense of the United States, at the expense of Europe, at the expense of our allies, because it destroys jobs in America, and because it endangers U.S. national security, I emphatically object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I understand the Senator believes he has such a serious objection to administration policy that it merits this exceptional tactic. I would submit, as I move into closing business, that it is not the biggest disagreement that a Senator has had with an administration. It is not the biggest disagreement that a group of Senators has had with an administration. To believe that would be to elevate this dispute beyond its merits. That is not to suggest it isn't significant, but it is not the most significant disagreement that an individual Senator has ever had with an administration.

What is exceptional is his tactic. Never before has a U.S. Senator used their power in this way to hold up this many nominees at such a critical moment. That is what is exceptional. That is what makes this moment so dangerous. That is why Senator MENENDEZ and I came down to the floor to try to unlock some of these nominees toward confirmation, because it is the tactic, not the disagreement, that is the exception.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 268, 321, 189, 247, 267, 270, 344, 301, 295, 296, 297, 298, and 299; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the Record; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; and that the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Jennifer Lester Moffitt, of California, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Marketing and Regulatory Programs; Kenneth Lee Salazar, of Colorado, to be Ambassador Extraordinary

and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the United Mexican States; Taryn Mackenzie Williams, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor; Alejandra Y. Castillo, of New York, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development; Andrew Eilperin Light, of Georgia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (International Affairs); Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr., of California, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness; the following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601: to be General, Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson; Damon Y. Smith, of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Department of Housing and Urban Development; Evelyn M. Fujimoto, of Texas, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Building Sciences for a term expiring September 7, 2022; Lori Peek, of Colorado, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Building Sciences for a term expiring September 7, 2022; Kimberly L. Jones, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Building Sciences for a term expiring September 7, 2023; William E. Holloway, of Pennsylvania, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Building Sciences for a term expiring September 7, 2021; and William E. Holloway, of Pennsylvania, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Building Sciences for a term expiring September 7, 2024 (Reappointment)?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

NATIONAL CATFISH MONTH

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to consideration of S. Res. 353, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 353) designating August 2021 as “National Catfish Month”.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.